



Bulletin

2016-05B

FISCAL YEAR 2017 PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION APPLICATIONS

Supersedes Inconsistent Prior IGRs, Bulletins and Other Written Statements

TO: Assessors and Collectors

FROM: Kathleen Colleary, Chief, Bureau of Municipal Finance Law

DATE: November 2016

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2017 Property Tax Exemption and Deferral Application Due Date

This *Bulletin* explains changes in the laws governing the due dates for applications for certain exemptions and deferrals from real estate taxes. These changes were made by the Municipal Modernization Act, which took **effect on November 7, 2016, and apply to fiscal year 2017 exemption and deferral applications**. St. 2016, c. 218, §§ 31, 100, 119, 122, 125-126, 146 and 247.

A. PERSONAL EXEMPTIONS AND DEFERRALS

Taxpayers now have until April 1 to apply for personal exemptions and deferrals from real taxes, unless the actual tax bills for the fiscal year are mailed after January 1. In that case, taxpayers have three months from the date the bills are mailed to apply. This deadline applies regardless of the billing system used by the city or town.

This deadline applies to applications for the exemptions and deferrals provided individuals under the following clauses of G.L. c. 59, § 5, which sets forth local property tax exemptions:

- Clause 17 (or local acceptance 17C, 17C½, 17D) exemption for seniors, surviving spouses and minor children with a deceased parent.
- Clause 18 exemption for older persons who are ill or disabled and have limited financial means.
- Clause 18A “hardship” deferral for persons experiencing temporary financial hardships.
- Clauses 22, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22D, 22E and 22F exemptions for veterans, spouses and surviving spouses of veterans, and surviving parents and surviving spouses of servicemembers who died during or due to military service.

- Clause 37 (or local acceptance 37A) exemption for legally blind persons.
- Clause 41 (or local acceptance 41B, 41C, 41C½) exemption for seniors.
- Clause 41A deferral for seniors.
- Clauses 42 and 43 exemptions for surviving spouses and minor children of police or firefighters killed in the line of duty.
- Local acceptance Clauses 52 and 53 for some ratepayers in cities or towns that have accepted the water or sewer debt service shift under G.L. c. 59, § 21C(n).
- Local acceptance Clause 56 exemption for members of the National Guard or reserves on active duty in foreign countries.
- Local acceptance Clause 57 exemption for seniors who receive a state circuit breaker tax credit.

B. RESIDENTIAL AND SMALL COMMERCIAL EXEMPTIONS

The same deadline also applies to applications for residential exemptions under G.L. c. 59, § 5C or small commercial exemptions under G.L. c. 59, § 5I granted as part of a community's property tax classification decision. In cities or towns that grant those exemptions, taxpayers who did not have the assessed valuation in their actual tax bills reduced to reflect the exemptions also now have until April 1 to apply for the exemption, unless those bills were mailed after January 1. As with personal exemption applications, taxpayers will have three months from the date the bills were mailed to apply in that case.

C. FY2017 PROPERTY TAX BILLS

Since most communities have already printed or otherwise established the form and content for their actual tax bills for this fiscal year, **no changes need be made to those bills**. We will revise the required tax bill notices on application due dates in the tax bill guidelines issued for FY2018.

We recommend, however, that you take appropriate measures to make taxpayers aware that they have additional time to apply for exemptions and deferrals this year. This could take various forms, including for example, use of any message section on the bill or a tax bill stuffer, or placing a notice on the community's website, the local newspaper or the local cable access channel.

If there are communities that want to modify their actual tax bills and have the ability to do so at this late date, the attachment shows the modifications (in bold) to be made to the second paragraph under "**ABATEMENT/EXEMPTION APPLICATIONS**" of the taxpayer notice section of the actual real estate bills. Again, communities are **not required** to make these modifications. They may advise taxpayers by other means of the new deadline as in the examples above.

Assessors and collectors with questions about tax billing should contact the Division's legal staff at 617-626-2400 or DLSLAW@dor.state.ma.us.

**REAL ESTATE ACTUAL TAX BILLS
TAXPAYER NOTICE – ABATEMENT/EXEMPTION APPLICATIONS**

IGR 16-201 SEMI-ANNUAL PAYMENT SYSTEM
MODEL 1(S)

You may be eligible for an exemption from or deferral of all or some of your tax. In order to obtain an exemption for which you are qualified, you must file an application in writing on an approved form with the assessors. The filing deadline for an exemption under Mass. G.L. Ch. 59, §5, Cl. (17, 17C, 17C½, 17D), 18, 22, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22D, 22E, 22F, (37, 37A), (41, 41B, 41C, 41C½), 42, 43, (or if locally adopted, 52, 53, 56 or 57) or a deferral under Cl. 18A or 41A **is April 1, 2017, or 3 months after the date tax bills were mailed, whichever is later.** The filing deadline for all other exemptions under Ch. 59, §5 is November 1, 2016, or 30 days after the date tax bills were mailed, whichever is later. The filing deadline for a residential exemption under Ch. 59, §5C, or a small commercial exemption under Ch. 59 §5I, if locally adopted and not shown on your bill, **is April 1, or 3 months after the date tax bills were mailed, whichever is later.**

IGR 16-203 SEMI-ANNUAL PAYMENT SYSTEM - ANNUAL PRELIMINARY BILLS
MODEL 3(S/AP)

You may be eligible for an exemption from or deferral of all or some of your tax. In order to obtain an exemption for which you are qualified, you must file an application in writing on an approved form with the assessors. The filing deadline for an exemption under Mass. G.L. Ch. 59, §5, Cl. (17, 17C, 17C½, 17D), 18, 22, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22D, 22E, 22F, (37, 37A), (41, 41B, 41C, 41C½), 42, 43, (or if locally adopted, 52, 53, 56 or 57) or a deferral under Cl. 18A or 41A **is April 1 if tax bills were mailed on or before December 31, 2016, or 3 months after the date tax bills were mailed if the bills were mailed after December 31, 2016.** The filing deadline for all other exemptions under Ch. 59, §5 is April 1, 2017, if tax bills were mailed on or before December 31, 2016, or May 1, 2017, or 30 days after the date tax bills were mailed, whichever is later, if the bills were mailed after December 31, 2016. The filing deadline for a residential exemption under Ch. 59, §5C, or a small commercial exemption under Ch. 59 §5I, if locally adopted and not shown on your bill, **is April 1, 2017 if tax bills were mailed on or before December 31, 2016, or 3 months after the date tax bills were mailed if the bills were mailed after December 31, 2016.**

IGR 16-204 QUARTERLY PAYMENT SYSTEM
MODEL 3(Q)

You may be eligible for an exemption from or deferral of all or some of your tax. In order to obtain an exemption for which you are qualified, you must file an application in writing on an approved form with the assessors. The filing deadline for an exemption under Mass. G.L. Ch. 59, §5, Cl. (17, 17C, 17C½, 17D), 18, 22, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22D, 22E, 22F, (37, 37A), (41, 41B, 41C, 41C½), 42, 43, (or if locally adopted, 52, 53, 56 or 57) or a deferral under Cl. 18A or 41A **is April 1, 2017 if tax bills were mailed on or before December 31, 2016, or 3 months after the date tax bills were mailed if the bills were mailed after December 31, 2016.** The filing deadline for all other exemptions under Ch. 59, §5 is February 1, 2017 if tax bills were mailed on or before December 31, 2016, or May 1, 2017, or 30 days after the date tax bills were mailed, whichever is later, if the bills were mailed after December 31, 2016. The filing deadline for a residential exemption under Ch. 59, §5C, or a small commercial exemption under Ch. 59 §5I, if locally adopted and not shown on your bill, **is April 1, 2017 if tax bills were mailed on or before December 31, 2016, or 3 months after the date tax bills were mailed if the bills were mailed after December 31, 2016.**